

CITY OF MUSKEGON
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

October 12, 2017

Vice Chairman B. Larson called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and roll was taken.

MEMBERS PRESENT: T. Michalski, F. Peterson, B. Larson, J. Montgomery-Keast, B. Mazade, J. Doyle

MEMBERS ABSENT: E. Hood, excused; S. Gawron, excused; M. Hovey-Wright

STAFF PRESENT: M. Franzak, D. Renkenberger

OTHERS PRESENT: K. Callow for Melching, 2110 Geneva Ln; S. Bolhuis, 1008 Randall

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the Minutes of the special Planning Commission meeting of September 14, 2017 was made by J. Montgomery-Keast, supported by J. Doyle and unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Hearing, Case 2017-26: Request for a Special Land Use Permit for outside aggregate storage in an I-2, General Industrial District at 1221 E Barney Ave, by Melching, Inc. M. Franzak presented the staff report. The property contains 23.5 acres and is zoned I-2, General Industrial, which allows for aggregate storage with a Special Use Permit. This property is the former location of ESCO, which manufactured chemicals as part of its paper products. Melching, Inc. intends to move its operations from the Windward Pointe/Sappi site to this location along with its offices which are currently in Nunica. The property has 12 buildings and a tank farm on site. Five of the buildings would be kept for future use while the rest would be demolished. There are also about 16.5 acres of open undeveloped land on site; about half of it is lowland with heavy vegetation that is planned to remain untouched. About 7.7 acres of this area will be used for aggregate crushing operations and storage; this area would be screened with a privacy fence. Just to the west of this area, closer towards Roberts St, they intend to store trucks and excavators. The plan does not show this area to be screened, but staff recommends that it should be, since they will be storing equipment. A site plan was provided to board members. The plan is broken into two sections-- one section is for the portion of the property north of Barney Ave and the other is for the section south of Barney Ave. Notice was sent to all property owners/tenants within 300 feet of this property. Staff was contacted by a couple of companies who were concerned over what type of aggregate would be stored on site. Staff has concerns as to whether this is the highest and best use of the site, given the minimal amount of developable industrial land available in the city.

M. Franzak discussed other areas of concern: 1) the amount of impervious surface proposed would exceed the amount allowed for the site, and 2) no stormwater management plan was submitted. He stated that both were important considerations due to the creek and wetlands in the area, and therefore staff recommended against the request.

B. Larson stated that Melching had been a good neighbor and it was good to have someone interested in the property. F. Peterson had concerns about additional traffic and the best use of the property. There was already increased traffic in the area due to the nearby hospital expansion, and with the amount of aggregate that would be coming and going, traffic congestion could become a problem. In addition, the new hospital building would look directly over this site. He stated that the site had not marketed for sale, and it would be a suitable location for manufacturing rather than storage. J. Doyle asked what was required for stormwater management. M. Franzak stated that this size development would require a full plan showing elevation and stormwater calculations. Locations of stored aggregate would be packed down and considered impervious surfaces so it was important to know where drainage would be. J. Montgomery-Keast asked if there had been any environmental studies done on the property. M. Franzak stated that he was not aware of any. T. Michalski asked if Roberts St was capable of handling further industrial traffic such as heavily loaded trucks. B. Mazade stated that Roberts St. was built to handle industrial traffic. F. Peterson stated that his concern was more about the volume of traffic. T. Michalski was concerned about the scarcity of land in the industrial parks, and materials storage was something that did not create many jobs. K. Callow stated that the City's plan showed this area as industrial and that was their intended use of the lot. He stated that they had already purchased the lot and thought their business would be a good fit for the area. He stated that they met the I-2 zoning requirements and the only question was the storage of aggregate. B. Larson asked what type of materials they planned to store there. K. Callow stated that they would store materials from building demolitions as well as aggregate. J. Montgomery-Keast stated that Little Black Creek, which ran through the property, was already impaired. She was concerned about thermal pollution and preferred to see a stormwater plan. She was not comfortable having aggregate storage near the creek. K. Callow stated that there would be no hazardous chemicals or controlled materials. B. Mazade asked him about the amount of pavement. K. Callow stated that he had not been aware that their plan exceeded the allowable maximum and he would take a look at it in an effort to comply with ordinance requirements. F. Peterson asked for clarification on the items to be stored. K. Callow explained that most of the sorting of materials was done on-site wherever the materials were originally located, to remove trash before transporting what was left to their property. It would not be the norm to bring all materials from a demolition site over to this site. J. Montgomery-Keast was also concerned with the noise from crushing operations, due to the nearby hospital campus. As far as the view, a fence would not screen anything from the upper floors of the hospital. B. Larson pointed out that the area of US-31 and Sherman Blvd. was already a noisy location. K. Callow stated that they would have a crusher on site, but Beacon Recycling was also right in the area and they ran heavy equipment at their facility as well, as it was in an industrial area. Their storage area would be at least 500 feet from the buildings on Roberts St. and over 1000 feet from the hospital. He pointed out the proposed area on an aerial map of the site.

S. Bolhuis owned a business in the area and stated that he had no objections to the request. He asked if Melching would be combining their properties in the area. K. Callow stated that they could not combine this site with the other due to a right-of-way going through the property. J. Montgomery-Keast asked if there was another location where they could store aggregate. K. Callow stated that there was an approximate 2-acre area but it was too small for their needs.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by B. Mazade, supported by B. Larson and unanimously approved.

B. Mazade pointed out that if this location was not approved for the aggregate storage, it would still be available for other heavy industrial use by right, which could allow more intense uses. J. Doyle was concerned with the lack of a stormwater retention plan.

A motion to table this case until the next meeting so the applicant can provide a stormwater management plan and address concerns regarding the impervious surfaces was made by B. Larson, supported by J. Montgomery-Keast and unanimously approved, with T. Michalski, F. Peterson, B. Larson, J. Montgomery-Keast, B. Mazade, J. Doyle

Hearing, Case 2017-27: Request to amend the final Planned Unit Development at 1740 E Sherman Blvd to allow construction of a new outbuilding, by Pacifica Companies. The applicant has requested to table this case at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None.

OTHER

Imagine Muskegon Lake – M. Franzak updated board members on this process. The stakeholder meeting went well and a public input session was scheduled for October 30, which members were invited to attend.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

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